



Town of Warren, Rhode Island

Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Special Meeting on January 20, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. at Warren Town Hall. The presiding officer was Karen Dionne. Board members present were Sara Volino, Ben Terry, Steven Sypole, Kathleen Tucciarone, and Mark Lombari. Stephen Smith was present as a guest. Town Council members Steven Thompson and Brandt Heckert were in attendance. Davison Bolster was in attendance. Kerri Cronin from Discover Warren was in attendance. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB.

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting held December 15, 2014

The minutes from the meeting of December 15, 2015 were reviewed by the board. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Volino, the motion was seconded by Mr. Lombari, and all members were in favor.

2. Presentation by Discover Warren of their new website and plans for 2015

Ms. Cronin updated the board on several upcoming events and projects that Discover Warren is working on in the near future. The Warren Preservation Society is hosting a group preservation event of Saturday, January 24th at Hope and Main. The purpose of the meeting is for various historic and preservation groups to share common goals that relate to preservation and economic development. Ms. Cronin noted that Discover Warren and The Warren Preservation Society are planning on organizing a House and Garden Tour for spring on 2016. This would be a community event that would encourage “pride in place” and generate tourism for Warren. Possibly proceeds raised from the event could be used to fund public grants for local preservation projects.

Discover Warren is in the process of editing a new version of the downtown walking tour map. Ms. Cronin updated the board on some of the improvements to the map, including the addition of an antiques section. The newest addition of the map will be released in February. Also, Discover Warren is updating its website; it will be more user friendly, visually interesting and more compatible for mobile phone access. The website will be updated by the end of February. Linked to the town website, the Discover Warren website would provide access to information about tourism generating events in Warren, such as the Warren Walkabout, the Holiday Festival, etc.

3. Discussion of work plan projects/initiatives 2015-16

At this time, the primary initiative of the EDB is to request funding for a new municipal website. Ms. Dionne read the board the recommendation and budget request for the improved website which will be submitted to the Town Manager. Mr. Heckert requested that the board attend the budget meeting on February 27th. Ms. Dionne is in the process of organizing a presentation by Civic Plus, a company that specializes in designing municipal websites, at the town hall. A tentative date and time for the presentation is Wednesday, February 28th at 3 p.m. Ms. Volino stressed that the board needs to know the cost of maintaining the current town website as part of calculating the budget for the new website. Mr. Lombardi said that it is important that the town hall employees see the benefit of a new website.

Another upcoming initiative for the EDB is a spring clean-up. The board discussed coordinating the spring clean-up efforts with the Earth Day event sponsored by the Conservation Commission. Ms. Cronin mentioned that Discover Warren might be promoting a music based event that would coordinate with a shopping event.

Ms. Volino said she would contact Caroline Wells to inquire if she needs help going forward with the Water Street improvement project. Also, the board discussed promoting the Storefront Improvement project. The board discussed hosting an open business forum for interested business owners; this will be discussed in more detail at the February meeting.

At this time, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Heckert, and Mr. Bolster left the meeting.

4. Discussion on ways for EDB to work with businesses and town officials to achieve mutual goals

The board discussed preparing a monthly report for Town Council, but decided that a quarterly report would be more practical. Ms. Dionne is waiting for Mr. DeSisto's advisement on organizing a "round table" meeting with Town Council.

Mr. Sypole presented the board with information on Road Map RI.

5. Election of chair and co-chair for 2015-16.

Ms. Volino made a motion that Ms. Dionne should continue as chair for 2015-16. The motion was seconded by Mr. Terry, and all members were in favor.

Ms. Volino made a motion that Mr. Lombardi should continue as co-chair for 2015-2016. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sypole, and all members were in favor.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Sypole, the motion was seconded by Mr. Terry, and all members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald
February 15, 2015

